

## Maryland: Eastern Shore & Chesapeake Bay

### Bike Vacation Only

You won't find another cycling tour like this splendid spin along Maryland's Chesapeake Bay! With our deep local connections, VBT brings you a unique adventure featuring Southern warmth and hospitality. In the quaint coastal village of Rock Hall, you'll be treated like family by your charismatic local innkeepers. Here, you might choose to relax—sipping cocktails by the water, taking a dip in the saltwater pool, or listening to the piano in your inn's charming parlor. Pedaling the cheerful inlets of Chesapeake Bay, you'll pass stately bayside homes, spin through the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, and visit the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park. For a quintessential perspective on the region, travel by boat up a local tributary to take in waterfront homes and regional history.

### Cultural Highlights

- Cruise a quiet tributary by boat, passing charming waterfront homes and landmarks steeped in local history.
- Feast on the region's famous seafood.
- Ride through the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, a haven for more than 250 bird species, and learn about Harriet Tubman at the newly opened Underground Railroad State Park and Visitor Center.
- Travel on the country's oldest privately owned ferry (since 1760), across the Tred-Avon River between Oxford and Bellevue.
- Cycle the quiet country roads leading to the charming small towns of Oxford, St. Michaels, Rock Hall, and Easton.

### What to Expect

This tour features easy ride options with only a few gradual hills. While it is possible to complete the entire week's rides without assistance, the VBT support vehicle is always available in case of inclement weather or for those who wish to shorten their rides.

**Tour Duration:** 6 Days

**Average Daily Mileage:** 6-33 miles

**Average Cycling Time:** 1-4 hours

**Group size:** 20 max

### Climate Information

**Average High/Low Temperature (°F)**

April 67°/48°, May 75°/57°, June 83°/65°, September 80°/65°, October 71°/53°

**Average Rainfall (in.)**

April 2.9, May 3.5, June 4.4, September 4.0, October 3.4

## **DAY 1: Your VBT Vacation Begins**

Your Maryland biking adventure begins at the Tidewater Inn, centrally located in the charming village of Easton. If you're flying to Baltimore, VBT offers a complimentary shuttle from Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI). The shuttle will make its only departure at 1:00 p.m. from the airport to the inn.

After settling in, take some time to explore the town. At 3:00 p.m., meet your VBT trip leaders for a safety and bike-fitting session, followed by a short warm-up ride. Then, join your fellow travelers at 5:30 p.m. for an orientation and welcome reception, followed by an included dinner at 7:00 p.m. in the inn's restaurant.

### Today's Ride Choices

Afternoon: Easton Warm-Up Ride — 6 miles

### What to Expect:

Your warm-up ride offers a chance to get acquainted with the bicycle that will be your trusted companion for the week. Depart from the Tidewater Inn and enjoy a relaxed spin along the quiet Easton Rails-to-Trails path.

Cumulative Distance Range: 6 miles

Included Meals: Dinner

## **DAY 2: Ride the Oxford & St. Michaels Trail / St. Michaels Harbor Cruise / Self-Guided Visit to the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum**

Today you're in for a treat—the Oxford/St. Michaels Loop is considered one of the premier biking routes on the East Coast. Your clockwise ride begins at your inn and leads through Oxford, a 17th-century town

with a rich boatbuilding heritage. Just two blocks from our rest stop, you'll find Cutts and Case Boatyard, home to a number of classic wooden boats on display.

Next, board the modest Oxford-Bellevue Ferry—the oldest privately owned ferry still in operation in America—for a short crossing of the Tred Avon River. From Bellevue, cycle through the charming town of Royal Oak, then continue on to St. Michaels, a picturesque bayside town, where you'll enjoy an included lunch.

In the afternoon, depending on availability, you'll either sail aboard the HM Krentz, a working sail-powered skipjack, or board a former U.S. Navy launch turned cruiser for a captain-guided orientation to the Chesapeake Bay Estuary. You'll also have time for a self-guided tour of the outstanding Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, which features over 10 exhibit buildings, the 1879 Hooper Strait Lighthouse, a working boatyard, and the world's largest collection of Bay boats. St. Michaels is also ideal for browsing shops, snacking, and soaking up the lively atmosphere.

Mileage hounds can extend their ride by cycling toward Tilghman Island before looping back to St. Michaels.

Back in Easton—a town often featured on “best small towns in America” lists—you'll find a delightful mix of dining, antique shops, galleries, and stores. The Tidewater Inn, a village centerpiece since 1712, offers fine food and drink at Hunter's Tavern.

This evening, dinner is on your own. Your VBT trip leaders will be happy to offer recommendations for excellent local restaurants.

#### Today's Ride Choices

Morning: Easton to St. Michaels — 19 miles OR Tunis Mills to Easton — 11 miles

Afternoon: St. Michaels to Claiborne Landing to St. Michaels — 10 miles

#### What to Expect:

The St. Michaels Loop is recognized as one of the premier bike trails in the Mid-Atlantic region, leading to the charming and popular bayside town of St. Michaels, where you'll enjoy lunch and a self-guided tour of the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum. This afternoon's route offers additional scenic waterfront views before looping back to St. Michaels.

Cumulative Distance Range: 10 – 29 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## **DAY 3: Ride Through Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge / Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park**

Leaving Easton this morning, you'll shuttle about 30 minutes to nearby Cambridge. Today's ride begins in front of the town's iconic Harriet Tubman "Take My Hand" mural.

Your scenic route winds through Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge. Recognized by The Nature Conservancy as one of the "Last Great Places," this 32,000-acre preserve offers quiet roadways ideal for cycling. Established 90 years ago, it serves as a haven for migrating birds and a sanctuary for endangered species. Nature lovers may enjoy stepping off their bikes to stroll along marked trails through the protected marshland.

You may also choose to visit the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park and explore the informative exhibits at the visitor center.

After exploring and relaxing over a picnic lunch provided by your trip leaders, you'll shuttle to Rock Hall and our inn, where a swim in the saltwater pool or a cool drink on the dock may be in order. Your hosts, Jim and Joanne, welcome you warmly. Dinner is included at the inn this evening.

### **Today's Ride Choices**

Morning: Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge — 20 miles

### **What to Expect:**

Your morning ride takes you through the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge for some peaceful bird-watching. Enjoy scenic cycling along paved, quiet roadways. Pause for a picnic lunch provided by your trip leaders and take time to visit the newly established Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad State Park. In the afternoon, shuttle north to Rock Hall and settle in at our inn for the next three nights.

Cumulative Distance Range: 20 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner

## **DAY 4: Ride the Farmlands of Kent County / Crow Vineyard & Winery / Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge**

More than half of the land in Kent County is devoted to farming, and this morning's ride takes you through its peaceful agricultural terrain.

Pedal past rows of wheat, corn, and soybeans on shaded lanes leading to rewarding views of the Sassafras River and Turner's Creek. Stop at the Sassafras Natural Resources Management Area for a relaxing break. This area is known for its sweeping views of the Sassafras River and Chesapeake Bay from high banks facing south. The river's edge is a haven for birdwatchers, with potential sightings of songbirds, waterfowl, and raptors.

Later, ride to Crow Vineyard & Winery, a 365-acre, third-generation working farm that produces award-winning wines. Enjoy a tour and tasting before shuttling back to the inn (approximately 30 minutes).

This afternoon, an optional ride from the inn leads into a tranquil wildlife refuge with views of the Chester River. Consider a walk along the Tubby Cove Boardwalk, which stretches over the marsh to a wooded island. The boardwalk continues to two viewing platforms and a rough walking trail that ends at an elevated platform offering panoramic views of Chesapeake Bay, Tubby Cove, and Calf Pasture Cove.

Dinner is on your own this evening at one of Rock Hall's inviting restaurants.

### **Today's Ride Choices**

Morning: Rock Hall to Kent County — 29 or 37 miles

Afternoon: Eastern Neck Wildlife Refuge — 13 miles

### **What to Expect:**

This morning's ride takes you deep into the farmlands of Kent County, where approximately 60% of the land is devoted to a variety of crops. Stop for a picnic break at the Sassafras Natural Resources Management Area before continuing to Crow Vineyard & Winery for a tour and tasting of the family's award-winning wines. After a shuttle back to the inn, an optional afternoon ride leads to the Eastern Neck

Wildlife Refuge for scenic bird-watching. Today may also offer an additional independent ride for experienced cyclists—ask your trip leaders for details.

Cumulative Distance Range: 13 — 50 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

## **DAY 5: Ride to Historic Chestertown**

After breakfast, ride north to Chestertown, a historic colonial town on the Chester River. Founded in 1705, Chestertown was one of Maryland's six Royal Ports of Entry and, by the mid-18th century, the second leading port in the state. The town's shipping boom brought great wealth, evident as you cycle past stately brick mansions and townhouses along the waterfront. Your VBT trip leaders will provide a self-guided cycling tour of Chestertown's historic district.

Continue exploring the town's brick sidewalks, visiting shops and galleries along the way. Enjoy lunch on your own at a local café, bakery, or one of the many restaurants—your trip leaders will offer recommendations.

If you prefer not to ride today, you may relax at the inn or explore the charming shops and cafés of Rock Hall.

This evening, gather for a festive farewell dinner to celebrate your journey biking the Eastern Shore.

### **Today's Ride Choices**

Morning: Inn to Chestertown — 19 miles

Afternoon: Chestertown to Inn — 14 miles

### **What to Expect:**

Today's ride takes you along quiet country roads through scenic farmland en route to Chestertown, a historic colonial town on the Chester River. Upon arrival, enjoy lunch on your own and take time to explore. You may opt for a self-guided architectural tour—on foot or by bike—using a locally produced map and brochure provided by your trip leaders. After your visit, cycle back to the inn or return by van with

your leaders. Today may also offer an additional independent ride for experienced cyclists; ask your trip leaders for details.

Cumulative Distance Range: 19 — 33 miles

Included Meals: Breakfast, Dinner

## **DAY 6: Your VBT Vacation Ends**

Your Eastern Shore biking vacation concludes mid-morning at the inn. An included shuttle will return you to Baltimore-Washington International Airport (BWI), arriving around 12:00 p.m. We recommend scheduling your flight no earlier than 2:00 p.m.

Included Meals: Breakfast

## **Accommodations**

May vary depending on departure date.

### **Tidewater Inn (Days 1-2)**

Accommodations at the Tidewater Inn offer the best of both worlds: the tranquility and charm of a historic Colonial inn along with modern luxuries like air conditioning that today's traveler has come to expect. Traditional decor and furnishings offer the perfect reflection of the downtown Easton setting, while resort-style amenities make for an indulgent stay. Relax in plush bedding featuring pillow-top mattresses under a cascade of fine European linens. Wrap yourself in a downy Egyptian cotton robe. Enjoy tech-savvy touches like flat-screen televisions and high-speed Internet access.

### **Inn at Huntingfield Creek (Days 3-5)**

The Inn at Huntingfield Creek is a 70-acre refuge in the finest Chesapeake tradition. Hosts Jim and Joanne Rich bring business and life experiences together to create wonderful memories at this quiet, country retreat. Your group will have exclusive use of the inn during our stays. Enjoy the saltwater swimming pool, the piano in the living room, and the sunset views over the tidal waterfront from the dock. This air-conditioned inn is the perfect setting from which to venture out on your planned activities.